

Final Report
Collaborative Decision Making Workshops
NOAA Award No. NA76FD0103
May 1, 1997 - November 30, 1998

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The first several months were spent planning the workshops and designing the curriculum. The following tasks were completed:

1. Contacted Sea Grant Extension Program Leaders in Connecticut, Rhode Island, and Massachusetts. Nancy Balcom, University of Connecticut; Dale Leavitt, Woods Hole Oceanographic Institute; and Kathy Castro, University of Rhode Island agreed to identify workshop participants and arrange some sites. This was very important to the success of the project and it saved some money that was budgeted for travel. In planning the project I had projected several trips to these areas to find sites, make meeting arrangements, and talk with possible participants. The Sea Grant people did most of that for me.
2. Hired Jerry Howe as a workshop teacher and facilitator. He and I spent several days working on a curriculum, agendas, teaching aids, handouts, and evaluation forms.

By November 30 Jerry Howe and I had all preliminary planning completed and all the contacts made in other states. All we had to do was pick dates, invite participants, and conduct the workshops.

A copy of the meeting agenda is enclosed in the Appendix. The curriculum was planned around the book *Getting to YES* by Roger Fisher, William Ury, and Bruce Patton. Each workshop participant received a copy at the end of the workshop. The workshops were run from 9:00 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. None of them actually went to 4:30. I did an introduction and overview of the goals of the program. Jerry Howe then described the various methods of conflict resolution including arbitration, mediation, and consensus with an emphasis on consensus.

After a break, Jerry and I covered the four main components of getting to yes or reaching consensus as outlined in the *Getting to YES* book:

- Separate the **People** from the Problem
- Focus on **Interests**, Not Positions
- Invent **Options** for mutual Gain
- Insist on Using Objective **Criteria**

This was really the most important part of the workshop. The goal was to get people to think about these principles. We gave examples and reasons why it is important to use these important rules. Jerry came back to these four ideas many times throughout the remainder of the day and we included them in the summary at the end of the workshop.

After lunch we covered some case studies. I talked about the Harbor Porpoise Working Group, Jerry talked about some community issues that he had facilitated, and we had a wonderful 15-minute video put out by the National 4-H Foundation on a working group consisting of ranchers, environmentalists, agencies, and concerned citizens dealing with some very contentious Public Lands issues in the West. Although the issues were different, the people in the video were real, and the workshop participants quickly related to them and their problems. The ranchers were feeling the same kinds of pressure that fishermen expressed

The next portion of the agenda was a facilitated session where participants were asked to identify the most pressing issues facing them. This served two purposes, first it gave Jerry a chance to demonstrate the process and point out what he was trying to do as a facilitator and remind the group of the four principles in the *Getting to YES* book, and second it helped the group actually take part in the process. This session did get quite lively in several of the workshops. The greater the diversity in the group, the more interesting the session.

After the facilitated session that identified the issue, Jerry asked the group to design a collaborative decision process to address the issue. After the issue was framed, the group had to come up with a list of people who should be present and the initial meeting of stakeholders was planned.

I did the workshop summary and evaluation forms were passed out, participants had to pass in the evaluation form before they received their copy of *Getting to YES*. A copy of the evaluation form is enclosed in the Appendix as is a group of filled out forms from the Rhode Island Workshop.

In November 1997 we were ready to pick some dates and start doing the workshops in January and February. Six workshops were scheduled with the help of the New England Sea Grant Extension Network.

- Narragansett, RI - February 20
- Portsmouth, NH - March 26
- New London, CT - April 14
- Wellfleet, MA - May 8
- Ellsworth, ME - May 19
- Portland, ME - May 22

Five of the six workshops went very well. The participation was terrific, the agenda seemed to flow, we dealt with some interesting issues in the facilitated portion of the workshop, and the evaluations were excellent.

We did not reach our goal of 30 participants at each workshop. The average was closer to 15 per workshop, but the diversity and enthusiasm of the participants was excellent. We had state legislators, state and federal agency representatives, recreational fishermen, aquaculturists, clambers, offshore and inshore lobster fishermen, draggers, gillnetters, former and present New England Fisheries Management Council members, and one U.S. Senator's staffer. Jerry Howe, the facilitator and other teacher, and I were very pleased with the quality of the workshops.

Unfortunately there was good weather on every day that the workshops were scheduled. In fact, they were all beautiful and this obviously cut down on the participation. One workshop was a complete bust. We sent 80 invitations to fishermen in the "Down East" region of Maine and only two showed up on May 19. It was an absolutely beautiful spring day, probably the first one of the year for that region. That was the only area that we did not have a local representative helping organize the workshop and that was probably another factor for the low turnout.

On May 6 I wrote to Joyce Lacerda asking for a no-cost extension to complete the project. We were obligated to do one more workshop in Massachusetts, and wanted to do two or three extra workshops using the remaining funds. I did get the extension, but it only went until November.

A Maine fisherman who had attended one of the Maine workshops came to me in October and asked if Jerry Howe and I could facilitate a meeting of commercial fishermen that had different views on the appropriate mesh size. I talked with Paul Howard, Executive Director of the New England Fisheries Management Council, and he agreed the issue was important and supported the idea of teaching fishermen about Collaborative Problem Solving around the issue. Paul Howard, Jerry Howe, and I met to discuss the possibility of bringing a group of stakeholders together and doing an "on-the-job" training in an attempt to get consensus on an issue.

Jerry agreed to facilitate the meeting while teaching the principles of collaborative decision making and work on a real issue. This was a departure from the methods used in the other workshops, but it was an opportunity to contact fishermen who would not ordinarily attend a workshop and deal with a real issue. The question being asked by fisheries managers was, "Is there any consensus on the appropriate mesh size for different species?."

On October 19, 1998, 23 fishermen met in Wakefield, MA. Also in attendance was Arnold Carr, Massachusetts DMR; Phil Haring, NEFMC; and Chris Glass, Manomet, MA.

The results of the workshop were mixed. Fisheries managers found there was little consensus on effectiveness of various mesh sizes on different species. There was consensus from various geographic regions and this seemed to be the determining factor. There were some very emotional and strong views on the issue. The fishermen did see the value of a good facilitator, one that does not have a vested interest and can act as a neutral third party. The mesh size issue turned out to be a very contentious one. Every person present that I talked with agreed that Jerry Howe did a terrific job facilitating some very emotional people. He demonstrated the principles of collaborative problem solving and in some cases they were demonstrated by showing what not to do. There was some "name calling" that proved to be counterproductive. When it did occur, Jerry was able to deflect it and point out the problems associated with that kind of behavior. The goal of teaching fishermen about collaborative problem solving was accomplished. Several people who attended this meeting have requested facilitators for other meetings. A final report of the meeting was sent to Paul Howard, Executive Director of NEFMC.

No other activity occurred during this period because both Jerry and I felt the workshops should be held during the winter months. On November 8, 1998, I wrote to NMFS asking for another three-month, no-cost extension to do three more workshops during the winter months.

I did not hear anything from NMFS. This final report is late because I was waiting to hear about the extension.

Summary

Seven Workshops were held, two in Massachusetts and Maine and one in New Hampshire, Rhode Island, and Connecticut. The curriculum was appropriate and met the goal of introducing the concept of collaborative decision making. All the evaluations were very good with a couple of exceptions. We did use the evaluations to make changes as the process went along.

The two concerns that surfaced at all the workshops were:

1. Why should stakeholders attempt to solve problems, the government always has the last say? Many fishermen had trouble understanding the value of bringing a proposal or solution with multi-stakeholder support to a government agency. They felt past experiences demonstrated that government didn't listen. They felt going to all the trouble of bringing people together could be a waste of time.
2. When participants began to see the light and started to actually think seriously about addressing an issue the question always came up, who is going to pay for the facilitator. Most people recognized the value of having a neutral facilitator, but couldn't imagine fishermen coming up with the money to pay for one.

As an Extension Educator I will continue to address these two concerns. My experiences conducting these workshops added to my belief that there are many opportunities to use collaborative problem solving in fisheries and marine issues, opportunities that can improve the quality of the decisions and our marine environment.

I would like to thank the Sea Grant Educators and Specialists that helped arrange the workshops, Joyce Lacerda from NMFS for her help and patience, and Jerry Howe who did a great job helping plan and facilitate the workshops.

Appendix A. Meeting Agenda

**Collaborative Decision Making
Fisheries Industry**

March 26, 1998 -Portsmouth, NH

AGENDA

8:30 COFFEE

9:00 Introductions and overview of the program
The nature of conflict and how it affects us
Methods of conflict resolution

- A. Consensus
- B. Mediation
- C. Arbitration

10:45 BREAK

11:00 Principles of collaborative consensus decision-making, what are the roles,
what are the responsibilities, and what are the consequences?

12:30 LUNCH

1:30 Case studies

What are the issues we are facing now?
Modeling of consensus decision-making on one of the issues identified
Review of the process and identifying opportunities for this
conflict-resolution process

4:30 ADJOURN

PRESENTERS: ROLLIE BARNABY, UNH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION/SEA GRANT
GERRY HOWE

Appendix B. Letter to Invitees

March 19, 1998

VIA FAX 4331885

You are being invited to participate in a one-day workshop on *Collaborative Decision Making*. The workshop, funded by National Marine Fisheries Service (NMFS) through their SK Grant Program, is being conducted by UNH Cooperative Extension/Sea Grant. You have been invited to participate because of your involvement or interest in fisheries management.

Managing fisheries and marine resources in general has become an incredibly complex process. Increasing coastal population, declining fish stocks, competition among users, the addition of new uses like aquaculture, and increased public awareness are some of the factors contributing to the complexity. Historically, most fishermen have a "leave-me-alone-and-let-me-fish" attitude and many scientists and managers had the same attitude, "leave-me-alone-and-let-me-do-my-job." Most people believe this way of addressing management issues, conflict, and decision-making is no longer working and it may be time for all stakeholders to work together to solve problems.

Collaborative Decision Making is a term that incorporates a range of tools and behaviors developed to resolve conflict, reach agreement, and build consensus. It is a process that **separates people from the problem**. In other words, instead of it being one person against another or one group against another it becomes two people or two groups identifying and addressing the problem together. This process **focuses on interests not positions** and more importantly **invents options for mutual gain**.

This workshop is being offered because understanding the principles and skills needed in *Collaborative Decision Making* can greatly enhance an individual's ability to be effective in the process.

This process is not new and has been used successfully in many natural resources conflicts and issues. The alternative in most cases is "going to war," creating a situation where there are definite winners and losers. Using a *Collaborative Decision Making* process is a way to identify the "win-win" situation. Many people feel using this process can greatly improve the way we manage marine resources.

The workshop will be held at Yoken's Comfort Inn in Portsmouth on Thursday, March 26, starting promptly at 8:30 a.m. Because morning and afternoon snacks and lunch is being provided, there are a limited number of spaces and we need an accurate "head count."

Please fill out the enclosed card and return it or call (603) 679-5616 or 1 800-248-6672 to RSVP. It is imperative that you let us know if you can't make it so that we can extend the invitation to someone else.

Hope to see you on the 26th. If you have any questions, feel free to call me.

Sincerely,

Rollie Barnaby Extension Educator, Sea Grant and Marine Resources UNH
Cooperative Extension

C. Evaluation Form

EVALUATION

COLLABORATIVE DECISION MAKING

- I. Did you learn more about the nature of conflict and how to deal with it from this conference?
- II. Do you feel that you are more able to deal with others, who do not feel the way that you do, regarding conflict?
- III. Does the use of "Consensus Decision Making" make sense to you in the fishing industry, if so why?
- IV. On a scale of one to ten (ten being the highest) how would you rank this session?
- V. Would you recommend this type of a session to your friends and associates, and why?
- VI. How could this session be improved in the future?